A window open on the world

The UNESCO Courier

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THE HERITAGE OF NEPAL

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TREASURES
OF
WORLD ART

94

GUATEMALA

Mayan stela

This sculpture of a figure in ceremonial dress, surrounded by hieroglyphs and other motifs, is a detail from a Mayan stone stela found in the jungles of Guatemala in the Department of Peten. It is executed with the vitality and lavish detail characteristic of Mayan stone carving. The stela dates from around 850 A.D. and was discovered in the ruins of Seibal, one of the remarkable cities built by the Mayas in Central America and southern Mexico.

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Assistant Editor-in-Chief
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Research : Christiane Boucher

Layout and Design : Robert Jacquemin

All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief in Paris

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COVER PAGES

Photo © Francis Brunel, Paris

Photo Marilyn Silverstone © Magnum, Paris

The "Unesco Courier" devotes the major part of this issue to Nepal, whose government is embarking, with Unesco's help, on a major plan which, while preserving the country's rich cultural heritage and natural environment, will also meet the needs of modern social and economic development.

Our front cover shows a 17th-century gilt bronze statuette of a Bodhisattva (a Buddhist divinity) holding a lotus. Behind the figure is a painting on silk of the same period.

On back cover, temple on Durbar Square in the city of Kathmandu. Nepal's Kathmandu valley alone boasts some 2,500 temples, sanctuaries and other historic monuments, including 800 of major importance recently recorded in the first detailed inventory of the valley's monuments.

6 DEC. 1974

UNESCO ARCHIVES

Photo © BBC, London

Urban development in the name of "progress" is today threatening the heart of many ancient cities with destruction. Unesco has been waging an international campaign for many years to save these irreplaceable buildings and quarters and has advocated that, instead of being demolished, the architectural treasures of the world's historic cities be given new uses and be adapted where possible to the needs of modern life. Left, two figures by the British sculptor Henry Moore. Right, oil painting by the Belgian artist René Magritte.

WHAT FUTURE FOR OUR ANCIENT CITIES?

by Georges Fradier

GEORGES FRADIER *is co-ordinator of Unesco's studies on man and his environment. A member of Unesco's staff since 1949, he was head of the Press Division and chief of Unesco missions to Mali and Sierra Leone before becoming director of the project for the safeguard and development of the Tunis-Carthage region carried out by the Tunisian Government and Unesco with financial aid from the U.N. Development Programme Special Fund. Novelist and essayist, he is the author of "Encounters and Celebrations", on the mutual appreciation of Eastern and Western cultural values (1963), and "East and West, towards mutual understanding" (1959), both published by Unesco. He has been a frequent contributor to the "Unesco Courier."*

Photo © Jacqueline Hyde, Paris

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Integrating historic sites into modern urbanism

THE preservation of historic towns and sites is a problem that arises even in countries where urbanization has only recently begun. Some capital cities which were no more than villages at the end of the 19th century already face problems of growth and a difficult choice between the preservation and modernization of their historic centres.

Such problems are even more frequent in towns with centuries, if not thousands of years, of history behind them. Violent controversies may be caused as much by misunderstandings as by conflicting interests. Some projects for urban renewal in historic city centres arouse strong feelings so confused that they are sometimes wrongly seen as new quarrels between the Ancients and the Moderns.

At first sight, the notion of a historic town or locality presents no difficulty for anyone. It seems quite clear in brochures and other tourist literature publicizing "cities of artistic and historic interest".

However, the places whose age and picturesque qualities get all the limelight are as a rule the best protected or at least the best provided with means for ensuring their preservation. Many other cities of equal merit, whose sites are less accessible or whose architectural worth is less easily discerned, remain neglected.

Today's rapidly expanding towns are better known for their vigorous growth than for the vestiges of their past. But now they are discovering the charm of their old quarters which seemed commonplace to the tourists of former times, interested only in the "remote" or "great" periods.

City buildings do not always need to have defied the centuries in order to be considered as venerable. They may be classified as historic because they were once the childhood homes of famous persons or the scene of outstanding events in the recent history of a nation.

The notion of a town or quarter of historical interest thus covers a wide variety of places: ghost towns, forgotten cities among whose ruins nomads now pitch their tents, overpopulated towns bursting with life. Some are legendary cities, known the world over; others are remote villages whose stones reveal their history to only a handful of scholars.

Some ancient cities, raised in the ▶

space of a few years, have retained an astonishing unity of style and the stamp of the age in which they were built. Others, which have been continually developing, are a disconcerting mixture of periods and styles—like manuscripts in which old writing has been rubbed out to make room for new.

All these groups of historic buildings have one thing in common: they are generally thought to be ill adapted to modern life. When their raison d'être —political, religious, military, cultural or economic—has moved elsewhere or disappeared completely through changes in religious, social and technological conditions, these buildings lose some of their original uses and are poorly equipped to fulfil new ones—as commercial centres, for example.

Once the wealthier and more enterprising sections of the population move out to new towns, the whole character of a city changes radically. People from low income groups move in, renting accommodation in former palaces, mansions, stately homes and ancestral dwellings. They cannot afford to maintain these buildings, which almost inevitably become dilapidated. Trade, previously geared to the needs of a prosperous, structured and diversified society, adjusts to the requirements of more modest and relatively deprived groups.

Needless to say, not all towns and quarters of historic interest have suffered the same fate: some are empty, some bubble with vitality; others have kept or regained their former prestige.

If a historic city has ceased to fulfil the purposes intended by its builders, are we to conclude that it no longer has a "raison d'être"? Or ought we, on the contrary, to endow it with new functions? And if so, what are they?

At all times towns and cities have changed in appearance, sometimes with brutal speed, for wars and fires have been powerful forces of urban development. But when a town or city was rebuilt after a disaster, its new appearance did not necessarily conflict with the original vision of the master builders of former times. The world of its inhabitants would change very little.

The new buildings which replaced the old were usually built on the same site and followed the same layout. Succeeding generations saw their town grow or shrink, become beautiful or ugly, expand or close in on itself. In other words, cities changed gradually. During one man's lifetime, his city would stay the same.

In our time, there has been a radical break with this process. Today, for the first time in history, every city in the world is being rapidly transformed, and in accordance with a uniform pattern. The disappearance of old city centres and quarters should not be an inevitable consequence of urban expansion, but this is what is happening everywhere.

Our industrial civilization is the first to possess both the financial means and the technical resources to demolish old buildings on a large scale and almost immediately to replace them with new and totally different ones.

This is why the issues involved when old towns are threatened with demolition often seem so confused. Only in modern times have we become aware of the problem and its inherent contradictions.

The ancient city existed as an unquestioned presence which no more gave rise to value judgements, to acceptance or rejection, than did the presence of a mountain or a river. But once its existence is questioned it *becomes* historic, and is either extolled or dismissed as alien to the modern world, a treasure for some, a source of embarrassment for others.

Large-scale demolition of historic centres or quarters is generally justified on the grounds of "progress" by the public authorities which either decide on demolition or allow it to take place. The needs and advantages of progress are expressed from a wide variety of viewpoints.

■ Traditional cities have been and still are condemned on aesthetic grounds. Cultural and political changes can provoke curiously hostile reactions to works of the past. What is ancient may be regarded simply as old, dirty, unseemly.

This attitude, still widely found in some countries which seek to hide the most typical examples of old architecture and town planning, brings to mind the contempt in which neo-classical Europe long held what it termed the "barbarism" of Gothic castles and cathedrals. The results are disastrous when the authorities, anxious to modernize their capitals, apparently feel nothing but shame for the evidence of their national culture, whose purity, moreover, they claim to defend.

■ Social considerations also play an important part. Badly cared for, overcrowded and often neglected by the public health and maintenance services, historic buildings used for housing can all too easily become classed as "insanitary". Old town centres are sometimes regarded as hotbeds of disease and epidemics, fit only for radical and over-simplified "cleaning-up" measures—as though demolition were the only cure for unhygienic conditions.

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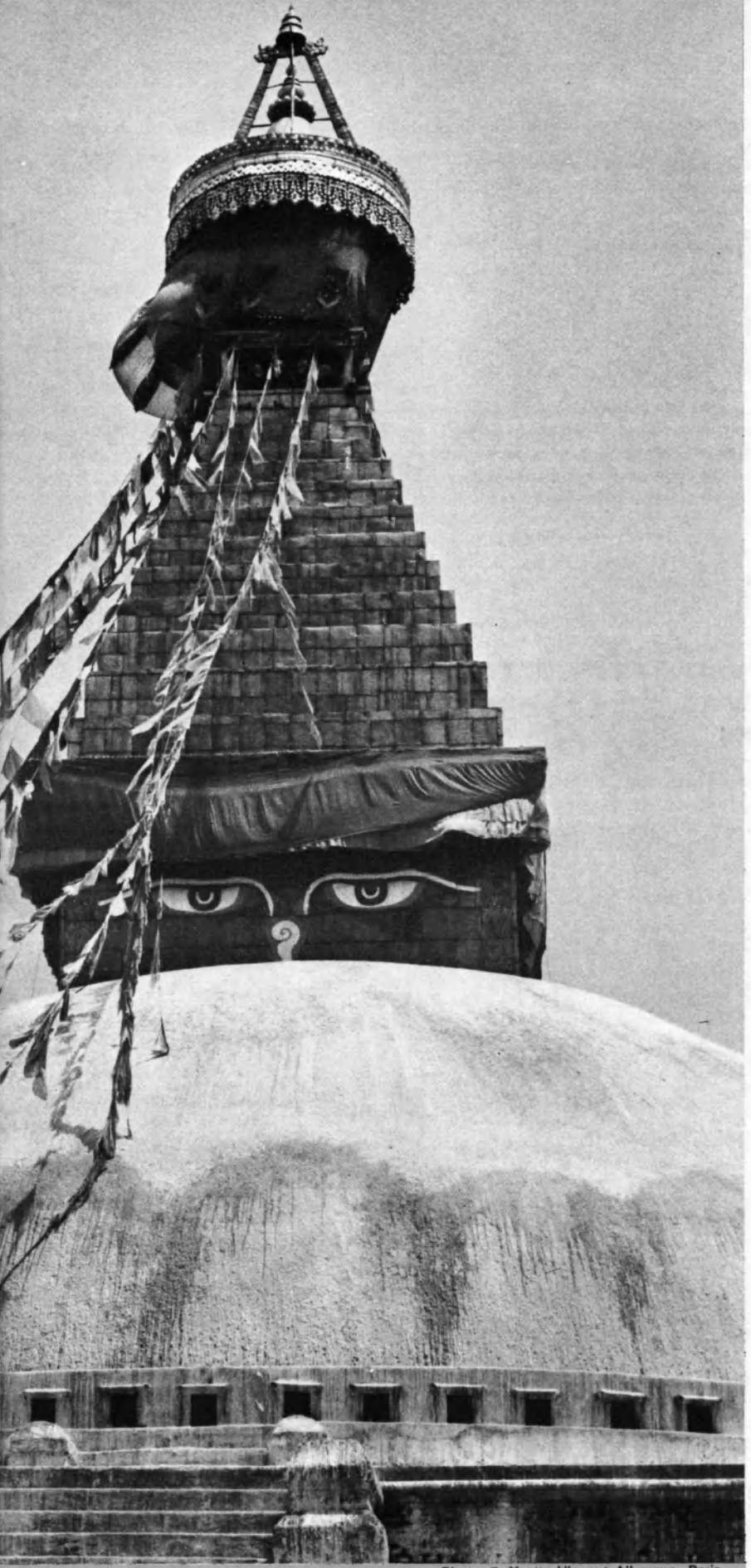

Photo © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

The largest Buddhist "stupa" or shrine in the Kathmandu Valley is that of Bodhnath (above). Nepal's thousands of stupas range from simple, hemispherical mounds of earth to elaborate stucco-covered edifices topped with a tower painted with four pairs of all-seeing eyes, as at Bodhnath. (For another view of the Bodhnath stupa, see centre colour page, and for aerial view of the same stupa, page 34; see also photo story on pages 28-29 for the significance of the eyes on stupas.)

THE HERITAGE OF NEPAL

Rising like a giant staircase from the low-lying Terai plain to the towering heights of the Himalayas, the Kingdom of Nepal is a confluence of peoples, languages cultures and religions. Its cultural and historic heart, the Kathmandu valley, with nearly four-fifths of all the country's historic monuments, is also the area of Nepal most affected today by modernization and urban development.

Nepal thus faces a complex problem of harmonizing social and economic development with the preservation of a rich and unique cultural heritage and a natural environment of imposing beauty.

Since 1968 Unesco has been assisting Nepal in the preservation of its historic monuments. It has helped in the restoration of the Hanuman Dhoka palace in Kathmandu, where the king will be crowned in February 1975 (see page 8). It has also aided Nepal in setting up a conservation laboratory at the National Museum in Kathmandu and is training specialists in restoration techniques, locally and through fellowships for study abroad.

To assist Nepal in making a total approach to the problems of conservation and economic growth, Unesco is now launching its first integrated enterprise in cultural conservation and development. Next May, Unesco will send a special team of experts to Nepal, in co-operation with the U.N. Development Programme, comprising specialists in the fields of economics, architecture, urban and rural planning, sociology, archaeology, public health, museology and legal questions.

The Unesco team will benefit from earlier surveys made by the Nepalese Government, in collaboration with Unesco and the United Nations, on town planning and the conservation of monuments and the natural environment and plans for economic development. It will also make use of the first detailed inventory of all the monuments and sites in the Kathmandu valley, just completed (see page 30).

Using this information and making new on-the-spot surveys, the Unesco team will prepare a master plan for the cultural development of the Kathmandu valley which, while preserving its monuments, will respect the needs of the people and protect the natural environment.

Right, part of Kathmandu's ancient royal palace of Hanuman Dhoka, now being restored with Unesco's help, where Nepal's kings are crowned according to time-honoured tradition, and where King Birendra will be crowned in February 1975. Photo shows architectural details of part of the palace overlooking the courtyard where the coronation ceremony takes place. At centre of photo, Kirtipur Tower, built by an architect from the town of Kirtipur.

Photo © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

Kathmandu's ancient palace where Nepal's kings are crowned

First stage of a Unesco plan for restoring the monuments of the entire Kathmandu valley

by Raj Mukunda

IN Kathmandu on February 24, 1975, Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev will be formally crowned King of Nepal in a courtyard of the ancient royal palace of Hanuman Dhoka. Like generations of their forefathers before them, the Nepalese will flock to the capital from all parts of the country to acclaim the newly-crowned King. As the age-old rituals are performed, and the King is presented to the people, all Nepal's religious, cultural, political and historical traditions will surge to life in an outburst of jubilation and festivity.

While ancient Vedic hymns are chanted, King Birendra will be anointed and washed by Brahman priests. Then, enthroned on a dais facing to the east, he will be solemnly instated, as Nepal's superb helmet-like crown, encrusted with pearls, diamonds, rubies and emeralds, and crested by billowing bird of paradise feathers is placed on his head.

As the young King leaves the palace, to be borne on a towering elephant through streets packed with his subjects, he will follow another ancient custom. He will offer flowers and coins to the Hindu and Buddhist images. The Palace where the coronation ceremony will take place is called Hanuman Dhoka because the image of the Hindu deity Hanuman is standing on the main gate.

The ceremony in the courtyard of the Hanuman Dhoka will mark Birendra's religious consecration. On coronation day he will become, in the eyes of all the Nepalese, the incarnation of the god Vishnu, the defender of good order, as the main duty of the King is to protect his country and his countrymen.

This relationship will be expressed symbolically in the palace courtyard, where the King will sit on a throne backed by a golden canopy carved in the form of a nine-headed cobra, representing Vishnu.

Hanuman Dhoka Palace is set in the heart of Kathmandu, a city founded in 723 and capital of Nepal since the middle of the 18th century.

***RAJ MUKUNDA**, of Nepal, is lecturer in Nepalese history at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.*

The Palace roofs rise tier upon tier from Durbar Square. Inside there is a whole bewildering network of irregularly connected courtyards, nestling between pagodas, shrines, columns and statues. They all form part of the extensive and rambling Palace.

These buildings are of great beauty and historical interest. But like many Nepalese monuments they have suffered harshly from the ravages of time. They have been rocked by the earthquakes which periodically hit the Kathmandu valley—one tower was particularly shaken by an earthquake in 1934 and now leans crazily to the north. They are exposed to the annual drenching of the monsoon. Much of the delicately carved polychrome woodwork which supports the roofs is rotten and in dire need of restoration.

Several years ago the Nepalese government appealed to Unesco for help in restoring and reconstructing its great historical monuments. In 1968 a Unesco mission recommended that certain parts of Kathmandu valley should be designated as "historic districts" and then in 1970 Unesco declared that it was prepared to initiate a programme for the conservation of temples and their environment in this valley.

The first conservation programme to be carried out by Unesco, in collaboration with the Nepalese government and with the United Nations Development Programme financing experts and equipment, is a project to conserve Hanuman Dhoka. The aim of the project is not only to restore the Palace but to train a conservation team for work elsewhere in Nepal. It was decided that the first stage in the project should be the conservation of "Nassal Chowk", the courtyard in which the coronation ceremony takes place.

Each of the 14 big courtyards, or *chowks*, in the Palace compound is dedicated to a different divinity. For instance the coronation courtyard is dedicated to the god Nartesvara, Nepal's "Lord of the Dance." Only one courtyard is generally open to the public. The rest are closed except on the occasion of the great religious festival known as "Durga Puja" (Durga worship), which is celebrated every autumn in Nepal. The Durga Puja is as important a festival for all the

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Photo © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

Photo John Sanday - Unesco

LEANING TOWER OF LALITPUR

Opposite page shows scene outside Hanuman Dhoka Palace during the coronation of the former King in 1956, seen here descending from a silver litter on Nepal's tallest elephant. Left, Lalitpur Tower, which was severely shaken by an earthquake in 1934. Along with Bhaktapur Tower (above) it is now being restored with Unesco's aid.

Photo Marc Riboud © Magnum, Paris

FOREST OF SCAFFOLDING surrounds two of the four towers of Hanuman Dhoka palace (bottom of page) during restoration work now in progress. Among the most beautiful features of the palace are the carved wooden polychrome struts (left) which support the overhanging roofs. In the meticulous task of restoration (below), Nepalese craftsmanship is being extensively used, and the Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project is helping to train a team which will carry out restoration work on other monuments in the Kathmandu valley.

Photos Ministry of Education, Kathmandu

Photo Unesco - Pushpa Man Chitrakar

Nepalese as Christmas is for the Christian world.

To the north of the main palace area rise three tall stone pillars. On top of two of them are bronze statues of Nepalese kings; the third supports an attendant lion. They guard the holy Temple of Taleju.

The temple, which forms part of Hanuman Dhoka Palace, is normally open only to priests, but during Durga Puja thousands of people climb the long flights of stairs up to it to pay homage to Durga. The private chapel of many Kings of Nepal, Taleju Temple is a massive three-roofed structure. Each roof is supported by carved and gilded struts, which stand out against a sombre dark red, brown and black background. Bells hang from the roofs and tremble gently in the wind.

Hanuman Dhoka is also the scene of Nepal's annual Indrajatra festival, which lasts for eight days and, like other religious festivals in Nepal, is celebrated by both Hindus and Buddhists. On the first day a long wooden pole is erected before Hanuman Dhoka in order to propitiate the god Indra. Then, against a background of gilded pagodas, classical

dancers wearing ornately decorated masks and headdresses gather in a courtyard of the palace to celebrate the visit of the god Indra.

Perhaps the most beautiful courtyard in Hanuman Dhoka is that known as "Lohan Chowk", which is enclosed by the "House of Enjoyment" built by the great 18th-century ruler Prithvi Narayan, who united the kingdom of Nepal. The House of Enjoyment, now in an advanced state of disrepair, contains some fine carvings and architectural details. Unesco is helping in its restoration. It has been proposed that it be used as a museum of Nepalese history, art and architecture.

Visitors to the Lohan courtyard are invariably surprised by the towers which rise at each corner. Each one is built in a different style. One is a majestic nine-storey construction, with three overhanging roofs. Another has a Bengali "elephant's ear" style roof.

A curious story surrounds the construction of the four towers. When planning his palace the King is said to have asked four towns in his kingdom to nominate their best builders and architects, and each town in this co-operative competition built a tower. The tallest and most spectacular, the nine-storey Bhasantpur Tower, was built by Kathmandu itself. The three others were named after the cities which built them: Lalitpur (also known as Patan), Bhaktapur (also known as Bhadgaon), and Kirtipur. Each tower looks out across the valley to the town which built it. All four are now to be restored with Unesco's help as part of the Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project.

Almost 100 feet high, Bhasantpur tower's nine storeys are connected by steep, narrow staircases, and on each storey there is a heavy trapdoor which can be bolted from above. From its balconies one commands the view once enjoyed by the monarchs of Nepal, who came to sit there in cushioned splendour to survey their kingdom. Durbar Square below teems with market traders; behind rise the tiered roofs of the Palace. The whole of the interior of this tower will be renovated as part of the current programme.

The restoration of Hanuman Dhoka is only the first stage in the collaboration between the Nepalese Government and Unesco. Unesco has already surveyed the principal monuments of the entire Kathmandu Valley (see article page 17). In this way the rich cultural and artistic heritage of Nepal, the cross-roads of two great Asiatic civilizations, will be saved. ■

Raj Mukunda

Photo © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

This five-roofed pagoda dominates the courtyards of Hanuman Dhoka Palace with its striking circular roofs. It stands in the eastern part of the palace, near one of Kathmandu's largest temples, which is so sacred that it is closed except for the annual celebrations in honour of its patron goddess, Durga.

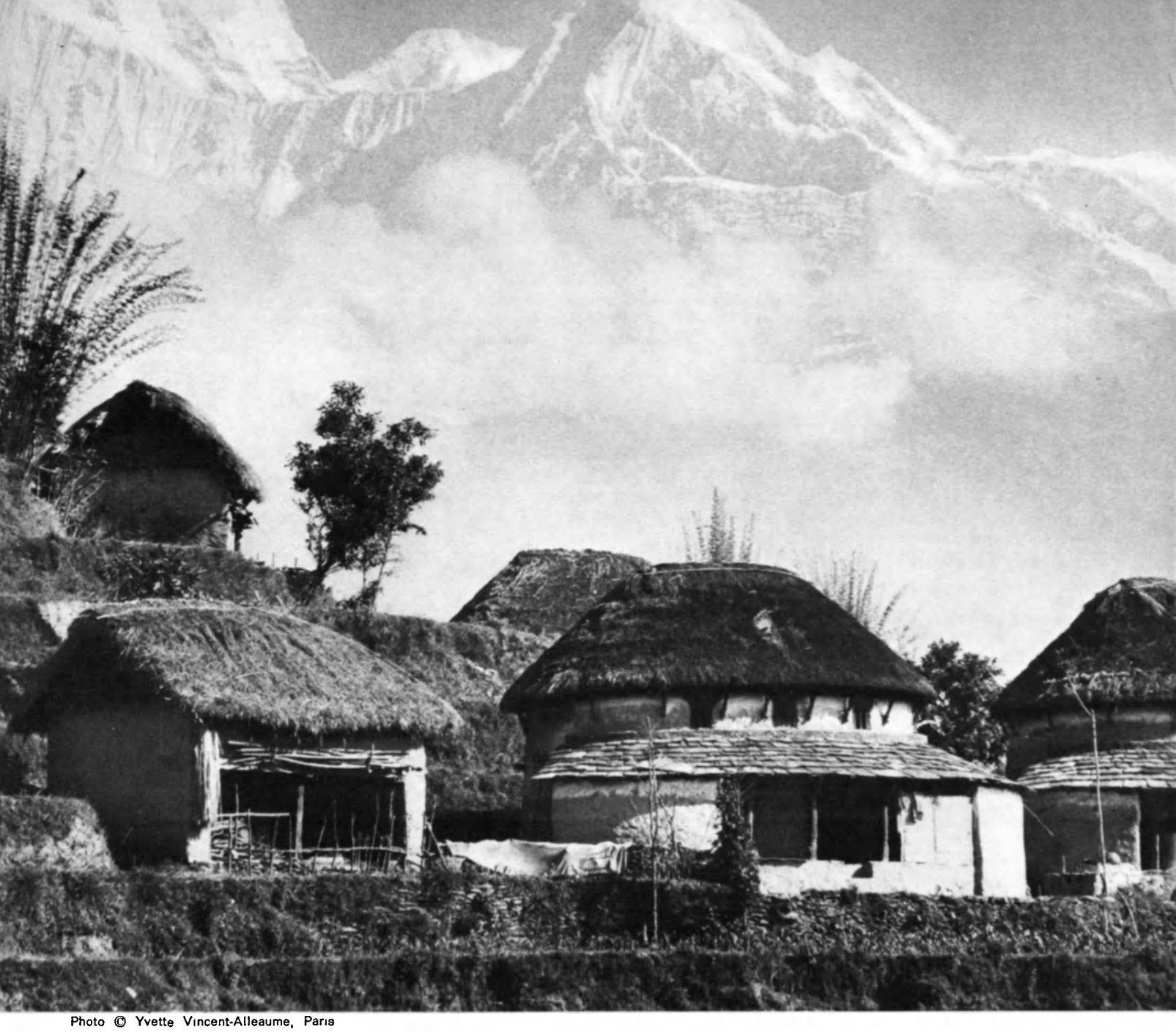

Photo © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

SPIRITUAL LANDSCAPE OF NEPAL

Meeting ground of cultures and religions in the shadow of the Himalayas

by
Bal Chandra Sharma

BAL CHANDRA SHARMA *is ambassador of Nepal to France and Permanent Representative of Nepal to Unesco. Vice-chancellor of the Royal Nepal Academy, he was formerly Nepal's Minister of Education and Speaker of the Nepalese Parliament. He has written extensively on the history of Nepal and is the editor of a dictionary of the Nepali language.*

Left, typical Nepalese mountain village, dominated by the mighty snow-covered Himalayan massif of Annapurna. Below, detail from a 16th-century Nepalese illuminated manuscript, depicting the serpent, which figures in the legendary origins of Nepal. The story goes that Nepal's Kathmandu valley was once a lake filled with serpents and hemmed in by mountains. A hero is said to have cloven the mountains with his sword and the water flowed out, carrying the serpents away.

Photo © Francis Brunel, Paris

FROM time immemorial Nepal has been a land where people have sought and found peace. The scriptures, epics and such famous works of the Hindus and Buddhists as the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas*, the *Buddhacarita* and others have told of tribes, races and dynasties of brave and cultured people who lived and ruled there.

In the shadow of the Himalayas, hermits, philosophers and thinkers meditated upon man and human happiness. In the eastern lowlands of Nepal, the saints Yaguanvalkya and his wife Gargi preached a kind of human dignity and nobility that could lead men to the divine. Janak, King of Bideha, the prototype of the perfect ruler and ideal man, established lasting ethical and moral precepts. His daughter, Sita, came to symbolize the ideal of Asian womanhood, and she and her husband, Rama, are the subject of the *Ramayana*, composed by the poet-saint Valmiki near the Gandak river in southern Nepal.

This epic, loved and cherished over most of Asia, has been an endless literary and artistic source of inspiration. The philosopher-saint Kapil meditated on the immortal figure of the Buddha, the Enlightened One, who said to his disciples: "I teach only two things: the cause of human sorrow and the way to be free from it."

This is the heritage of Nepal and of its people, thinkers, poets and artists. Stupas, pagodas and temples honour Shiva, god of peace and prosperity, or the Buddha in meditation —themes which inspire all the arts: literature, music, dance, painting, sculpture. Hospitality, optimism, tolerance, understanding, creativity and contentment are hereditary qualities that created a social environment which—quite apart from Nepal's geographical position—made it an ideal meeting place for different trends of thought and culture.

The fertile valley of Kathmandu escaped the strife and turmoil of neighbouring countries. Thinkers and artists here found welcome, peace and quiet beneath the great blue sky, where the solemn, mystic peaks of the Himalayas stand guard, beyond vast expanses of green woodlands with their orchids and rhododendrons, their never-ending music of streams and birds.

Ar-Niko was one of the Nepalese artists and master-craftsmen at the Court of Hublaii Han (Kublai Khan) in the 13th century. He became Imperial Minister for Building and Arts in China. Best known among his contributions to architecture, metal casting and painting is the Buddhist Chaitya, ▶

popularly known as the White Dagoba, which he had placed on a hillock in the Central Park in Peking.

The rise of the Hans of China and Mongolia carried his fame and influence to Mongolia where he was known as Bolbo-Khu (Bolbo being the Mongol for Nepal, and Khu meaning young man in that language), and was accorded god-like status—utter the name of Bolbo-Khu before a simple Mongol, and his head will bend in reverence.

The Nepalese have never fought in the name of god or religion, and have no word for a crusade or holy war. Battles and fighting did of course occur during Nepal's long history, but the total number of people lost in all of them does not exceed a thousand. There have been no quarrels over language, or between sects. And yet Nepal is the home of the Gurkhas, whose bravery and valour were displayed in helping to defend the world against tyranny in two world wars.

In this there is no paradox. Nepal is proud of its age-old liberty and independence. It has never been a colony of any foreign power. The people defended both themselves and others who called upon them for assistance. Non-alignment, opposition to all forms of racialism, colonialism and exploitation; peaceful co-existence and friendship for all—these have been the guiding characteristics of Nepal's foreign policy.

However, Nepal had to undergo the nightmare of a century of family autocracy under the Ranas (from 1846 to 1951) before democracy was restored by King Tribhuvan. The reign of his son and heir, King Mahendra, was one of reconstruction and progress. He installed the Panchayat system in 1962.

The main purpose of the Panchayat system is to ensure maximum participation of people in government and administration by encouraging the development of local government institutions at different levels, and making them into an integral part of the structure of national government.

The basic unit is the village Panchayat or council of village people, always a traditional concept in Nepalese society, but now given a new form and new functions. There are two political bodies at the village level: the Assembly, which includes all adult members of the village; and the Panchayat, or executive, consisting of eleven members elected by it on the basis of adult franchise.

The successor of King Mahendra, the present King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, has come to the throne with new ideas and a deep understanding of world affairs and of the contemporary problems facing his country. ■

Bal Chandra Sharma

Photo © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

Detail of a 7th-century stone sculpture of the God Vishnu, who is venerated by Nepalese Hindus. The five-metre-long statue lies in the waters of a huge artificial pool in a beautiful setting at Buddhanilkhantha near Kathmandu. Showing Vishnu on the coils of the serpent Ananta, symbol of eternity, the sculpture is a centre of pilgrimage for Hindus who bring offerings of flowers, rice, and the leaves of the basil plant, considered sacred.

AN ART THAT CONCILIATES GODS AND MEN

... but countless Nepalese masterpieces are now threatened by the ravages of time, pilfering and modernization

by Ernest A. Connally

NEPAL remained an enigma to most of the world until it was opened to foreign visitors less than two decades ago. A land-locked kingdom stretching 500 miles along the southern slopes of the Himalayas, it is bordered by China (Tibet) on the north and India on the south. Its terrain varies from the jungles of the Terai to the snowy peak of Mount Everest. Kathmandu, the capital city, stands in a valley at an elevation of 4,500 feet.

Unified as a kingdom just two centuries ago, Nepal is a geographic, ethnic, and cultural combination. With a population approaching 12 million, its peoples represent six or seven major ethnic strains. It is a land of regional distinction in social custom and dress. It is a land of three languages, a dozen dialects, and two major religions.

Officially Hindu, the country is also heavily Buddhist. Temples of both often stand side by side, with some practices of faith tending to mingle.

Inscriptions on the monuments are usually rendered in a version of Kiranti, the old Sanskrit-derived literary language. The major modern tongues are Nepali and Newari, while some dialects of Hindi are spoken along the Indian border. Although Nepali is now the *lingua franca*, it is less than 200 years old, having developed, with the unification of the kingdom, from Gurkali with borrowings from Hindi. Newari is the old language of the people of the Kathmandu Valley, who knew themselves and their speech as Nepali. The term Newari came into standard use only after it was adopted by missionaries in the late 18th century. A synonym for Nepali, the name was merely spelled according to a dialectical pronunciation.

The modern name Newari therefore denotes not only the language but also the people of the Kathmandu Valley. Their ancestors were the original Nepali, whose cultural hegemony provided the kingdom with its name, its most important style in art and architecture, and its major monuments.

The Kathmandu Valley is the cultural and historic heart of the kingdom. In this valley rises the sacred Bagmati River, flowing down to India. In this valley stand the important cities of Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhadgaon.

The early history of the valley is obscure. It is certain, however, that its ancient inhabitants absorbed several waves of Indian immigration. Indian influence is strongly evident,

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ERNEST A. CONNALLY *is head of the office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation of the U.S. National Park Service, in Washington D.C. In* 1968 *Unesco sent him to Nepal to advise on the preservation of Nepal's historic monuments and the promotion of cultural tourism. The author has written a more extensive presentation of the subject in a report on his mission which he prepared for Unesco entitled "Nepal—Cultural Tourism."*

and it is possible that the valley was subject to the Indian Emperor Asoka in the 3rd century B.C. Although Siddhartha Gautama, eventually known as Buddha, was born (c. 563 B.C.) at Lumbini on the southern frontier of modern Nepal, he made his career in India. And it was from India that the gods of Buddhism and Hinduism came ready-made to Nepal, where they assumed each others' attributes and assimilated virtues of the old animistic belief. Nevertheless, ancient fetishes are still venerated and blood sacrifice persists.

Apparently the gods gradually penetrated the valley through commercial and dynastic connexions with India. From the middle of the 4th century to the middle of the 8th the valley was controlled by the Licchavi and other dynasties related to princely Indian clans influenced by Gupta civilization. It was in these centuries and under that cultural stimulus that Nepalese art emerged.

The earliest existing pieces of figure sculpture are dated to the 5th century. In the 7th century Chinese travellers remarked the skill of Nepalese artists. They mentioned the temples of both faiths standing side by side, as we see them today; and they described a seven-storied tower of the royal palace at Deopatan and multi-storied temples on the hills.

It is possible that the Chinese travellers were describing pagodas, which they regarded as novelties. In any case, it is certain that basic forms in art and architecture had been established by the mid-7th century, from which time the Newari style radiated its influence beyond the valley to Tibet and finally to China. In the 13th century, Newari artists were summoned to the service of Kublai Khan.

Evidently the cities of Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhadgaon had not come into existence at the time of the Chinese visit in the 7th century, although by that time each may have had a nucleus in the form of a religious shrine. The cities came into importance only under the Malla dynasty in 1200 A.D.

In Nepal religion is more than a faith; it is a way of life, integrated with all human action and always visibly evident. Thus an early English traveller to this remote, enigmatic land was prompted to observe that there were as many gods as men and as many temples as houses. Among the multitude of temples are three readily recognizable types: pagoda, stupa, sikhara.

The pagoda is by far the most distinctive and most numerous type. In all the variety of sizes in which it is found, the pagoda-temple characteristically consists of a square chamber containing the cult image, above which rises a series of progressively diminishing hipped roofs. The tiers of roofs vary in number from two to five, three being commonest. The chamber is usually constructed of brick, while the roofs are covered with small tiles or, in some cases, sheet metal. In a few extraordinary instances the sheet metal is gilded.

The roofs are usually supported by wooden struts, carved and polychromed, and the eaves are graced with a fringe of small bells. In larger examples the cult chamber is surrounded by a colonnade of carved wood. The temple stands upon a paved terrace or platform. It is sometimes situated within an enclosed courtyard, spacious or restrictive; often it rises solo on a high stepped platform located at some irregular plaza within the town.

As an architectural form, the pagoda may have been developed before the 7th century; however, it is doubtful that any existing example can be dated earlier than the year 1400. The Temple of Changu Narayan at Changu, the construction of which is dated to 1401, may be the oldest existing pagoda.

While the pagoda is used by Hindus and Buddhists alike, the stupa is peculiar to Buddhism alone. Characteristically, the stupa is an artifical mound of hemispherical shape and symbolic meaning. Scattered throughout the kingdom are numerous stupas that are mere mounds of earth of varying size. Others are regular architectural constructions in brick and stucco, also of various sizes.

The two largest and most important examples in the valley are Bodhnath at Baudha and the Swayambhu or Swayambhunath stupa at Sengu west of Kathmandu. The latter consists of the characteristic large mound finished with stucco and periodically whitewashed. Atop the mound is a cubical tower painted on its four faces with pairs of all-seeing eyes. It is surmounted by a spire of successively diminishing rings of burnished metal culminating in a delicate gilded umbrella. The stupa is situated on a platform on a hill. It is surrounded by a host of small temples and lesser monuments, some in cut stone, and a number of monastic buildings.

The introduction of the stupa into Nepal is claimed as early as the 3rd century B.C. However, the dates of existing stupas are very uncertain.

The sikhara is a North Indian temple-form, an apparently recent importation, clearly revealing its origin. It is characterized by a tall slender dome, suggesting the shape of a folded umbrella, usually rising above colonnaded platforms. The umbrella-like dome is built hollow, the shell being laid in corbelled masonry, stone or brick.

The brick examples are plastered on the exterior. Fairly common, they can be found here and there among the pagodas. A conspicuous, rich example in cut stone is the Temple of Krishna Mandir (dated about 1630) in Durbar Square, Patan. Although the sikhara is most readily identified with Hinduism, the form is used by Buddhists as well. The Mahabaudha Temple in

CONTINUED PAGE 27

Colour pages

SMILING BUDDHA. This gilt bronze mask representing the Buddha is worn during an important festival held at Patan near Kathmandu once every four years. Dot beneath the Buddha's third eye is the "tika," symbol of longevity. Worshippers entering a temple dip their ring finger into a container holding vermilion and rice powder set at the feet of the god who is worshipped there, then mark a tika on their forehead to obtain the Buddha's blessing and longevity.

Photo Marc Riboud © Magnum, Paris

THE 74-ARMED GOD. Samvara, a Buddhist protective god known as the Great Defender, is depicted in this 17th-century painting with 74 arms. With 12 of them he grips his "sakti", or female complement, in a close embrace. He is shown standing on the goddess Camunda (left) and a Hindu god Bhairava (right), who is also a guardian of the Buddha.

THE SELF-BORN LORD. This 17th-century painting on cloth depicts the primordial Buddha, giver of peace and protection. In Nepal Buddhism and Hinduism are closely linked, and here the Buddha's lotus eyes oversee various Hindu divinities, including (centre left of painting) the elephant-headed god Ganesha, son of Shiva and Parvati.

Photos taken from "Tantra Art". © 1966 Ravi Kumar, New Delhi, Paris

ALL-SEEING EYES OF THE BUDDHA. The deep-coloured eyes of the Buddha, in lotus form symbolizing wisdom, look out from the tower of this Nepalese stupa, or sacred shrine, at Bodhnath (see also pages 7 and 34). The 13 steps of the pyramid which rises above the tower symbolize the 13 steps to Enlightenment, or "Bodhi", and the name Bodhnath actually means "Lord of Enlightenment".

Photo © Francis Brunel, Paris

THE GODS AND THEIR GUARDIANS Fresco on the wall of a temple in the Nepalese town of Banepa near Bhadgaon. Dedicated to the Moon goddess Candeshwari, the temple is a sanctuary for both Hindus and Buddhists. Fresco depicts the Hindu goddess Kali wearing a crown of peacock feathers. The peacock is considered sacred, its fanned tail feathers recalling the "wheel of life".

Photo © Millot, Paris

The staircase leading up to the temple of Nyatapola in Bhadgaon is flanked by five pairs of guardian figures, arranged in order of increasing power from the bottom of the staircase to the top. Shown here is one of the pair of figures at the bottom of the staircase— depicting a famous wrestler of Bhadgaon.

Photo Serraillier © Rapho, Paris

The Buddha on the sacred hill of Swayambhunath (see pages 28-29). The statue is painted in two sacred colours, red associated with fire, and yellow associated with earth. Figures in niches at each side of the Buddha are disciples.

Photo © Francis Brunel, Paris

Brightly coloured sculpture of a lion guards the entrance to a temple at Patan, one of Nepal's four biggest towns. Symbolizing strength and ferocity, lion figures with sharp teeth and glaring eyes stand guard outside many Nepalese temples.

Photo Marc Riboud © Magnum, Paris

Patan (south of Kathmandu) is an extraordinary version in moulded terra cotta.

The temples rarely stand isolated from their surroundings. They are integrated into the neighbourhoods of the cities and towns, and they are found in monumental groupings both urban and rural. The sensitive composition of these ensembles, which are particular expressions of an old and unique civilization, clearly demonstrates the Newari genius in ordering the environment.

Everywhere one sees evidence of that thrifty regard for the land that suits the needs of a long-established, agriculture-oriented society. Everywhere one sees terraced fields lying at the foot of surrounding hills, forming the picturesque scenery that is characteristic of the valley.

One can see the same attitude expressed in the stepped platforms of the temples, which figure so importantly in community life, and in the compactness of the temple groups and their overall terraced structure.

In Patan, the Temple of Red Machhendra, venerated by both Buddhists and Hindus, is a rich pagoda standing on a low platform near the centre of a large grassy quadrangle enclosed by secular buildings. The temple precinct serves as a public space, and playground, in the daily life of the people. On the platform about the temple are low columns supporting some of the valley's finest and most delicate bronze sculptures.

The ground plan of the temple group at Changu shows temples of several sizes and lesser monuments on a terrace enclosed by low colonnaded structures, with approaching stairs and a pool. Pools are often conspicuous features in temple complexes, the use of water having been remarked by travellers since the 7th century.

The Newari's strong sense of community, together with their sensitive regard for the landscape and their thrifty use of space, produced a sustaining balance in the building of towns, which was achieved through physical devices.

The irregular pattern of circulation indicates a process of organic growth, with consequent variety of view and spatial transition. The uniformity of house design, however, provides consistency, while throughout the overall pattern there is an even balance between built-up and open areas.

Among the open areas are walled green spaces for private use and accessible public spaces of varying size for community purposes. And finally there is the rectangular temple square, with its rich monuments integrated near the centre, and on the edges of the settlement the usual water tanks and terraces.

An important visual aspect of the Newari legacy are the townscapes, resulting from the natural terrain and appropriate ways of building on it. Although individuality is not lacking among the towns, there are many common characteristics which are perceived on approach, as to Chapagaon, by traditional paths that were never meant for means of transport other than pedestrian.

The rush to modernity poses a serious threat. Immediate effects are already evident in the city of Kathmandu and the Kathmandu Valley.

Serious intrusions into the compact consistency of the historic core of Kathmandu followed the earthquake of 1934, which provided the occasion for opening several wide straight streets and rebuilding in a dull academic style, the white stucco of which stands in sharp contrast to the traditional buildings of natural brick and carved wood. Because of their increasing size, concrete construction, and stucco finish, the new buildings introduce a jarring note in the historic urban core.

Industrial development threatens to conflict with cultural values. Road construction is often undertaken without sufficient regard for the old traditional balance between the natural and the man-made in the countryside, or without sufficient respect for traditional built-up areas.

At Baudha, the main street has been widened by the removal of houses along one side of the old road. Their replacements are unsympathetic to the old houses on the opposite side, which were suffered to remain and need restoration. Furthermore, the old gateway to the important Bodhnath stupa was destroyed. Small and restricted, like a keyhole, it provided a sudden and dramatic revelation of the monument as one entered the sacred precinct from the road. Now there is an open, axial approach and the old spatial control is gone.

Although some restoration work is being done on the temples, the great majority suffer steady decay. It is estimated that some wooden constructions will be lost through structural failure within ten or fifteen years. Meanwhile on many temples we can see makeshift protective devices in the prevalent corrugated iron roofs and the stiffeners added to the carved wooden struts that support the eaves.

Apparently it is the rise of tourism that has prompted the pilfering of carved wood, metal work, inscriptions, and other decorative items from the temples. Presumably these objects are destined for the clandestine curio market. The problem seems to be growing and is serious for a number of reasons.

Among them is the loss of those small metal plates, so easily portable, bearing inscriptions pertaining to the construction of the temple, which may be otherwise unrecorded. Once it is detached there is practically no way to determine to what specific temple a plate may belong.

Another loss, of course, is artistic. For example, the temple of Vishnu in Patan has been stripped of its copper repoussé door surround and other metal work. Other monuments have suffered the same indignity, and the problem of adequate control is very difficult.

Several important steps have been taken by His Majesty's Government for the preservation and development of historic sites and monuments. A National Planning Commission has been created at the ministerial level. It is composed of five members, all recognized as leading professionals, including a member for regional development.

The formation of the Planning Commission provides the most promising means for ensuring inter-ministerial coordination in all phases of economic and physical development, including the preservation and development of the Kingdom's rich and unique legacy of historic cities, towns, sites, and monuments. ■

Ernest. A. Connally

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE. Buddhism and Hinduism in Nepal are practised side by side and even draw on each other's spiritual traditions. An example of this spirit of harmony is the religious festival shown here, where a Buddhist lama from the stupa of Bodhnath occupies a place of honour before a Hindu temple at Bhadgaon. Seated at right of photo with a prayer wheel in his hand, he watches two masked dancers, representing demons in the Buddhist pantheon. A long serpent hangs down from the roofs of the Hindu sanctuary, the worship of Nagas (serpents) being an ancient Nepalese and Hindu cult.

Photo Marilyn Silverstone © Magnum, Paris

Lotus eyes of the Buddha

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According to Buddhist tradition, the first great stupas were built during the reign of the Indian emperor Ashoka in the third century B.C. and were erected in the region of present day Nepal. The Tibetan Chörten is derived from the Indian *Stûpa* or *Caitya,* and its architecture developed from the pre-Buddhistic autochthonous Indian grave-mound. Under these mounds the saintly ascetics were buried; their bodies were seated on the ground in Yoga posture and then covered over with earth. These dome-shaped graves, or tumuli, of the saints were regarded as holy places.

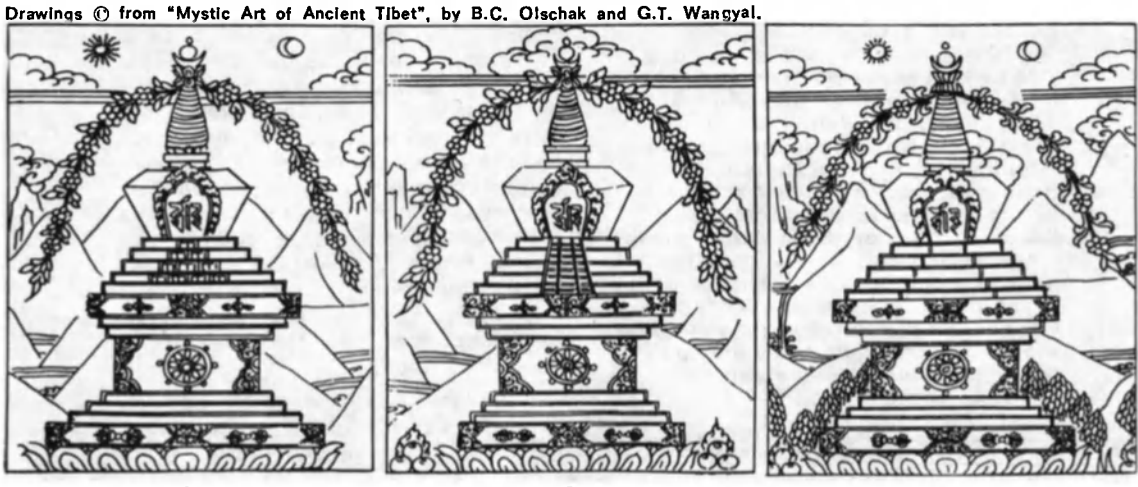
In Nepal today the former sepulchral mound rises as the gigantic dome of a temple, and from these famous Nepalese Eye-Chörtens, the eyes of Buddha—above the coupola—gaze in four directions. Analogous but smaller Chörtens were built in the far east of Bhutan; according to local reports, they were constructed at the end of the eighth century.

The basic structure of a Chörten consists of a square foundation symbolizing the earth, a dome symbolizing water, and thirteen tapering steps of enlightenment symbolizing the element of fire. These steps lead to a stylized parasol, the symbol of wind, which is topped in the ethereal sphere by the well-known "twin-symbol" uniting sun and moon, which is the shimmering crown of a Chörten.

— ***Blanche Christine Olschak and Geshé Thupten Wangyal***

from *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet*
© 1973, published by George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London

Drawings © from "Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet", by B.C. Olschak and G.T. Wangyal.



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SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA. Right, Buddhist tomb-sanctuaries known as "Chörtens." (See explanatory text above.) They commemorate important episodes in the life of the Buddha Shakyamuni. From left to right: (1) birth of the Buddha; (2) visit of the Great Teacher to the celestial sphere of the Gods; the heavenly ladder by which he returned to earth can be seen on the front of this Chörten; (3) the Buddha's struggle against the forces of evil; (4) his victory over these evil forces; (5) the Buddha's final Enlightenment and absolute purity, i.e. freedom from sin and all worldly illusions; (6) the three paths leading to spiritual liberation; (7) the Buddha's attainment of the highest Nirvana.

Photos © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

"Lotus Eyes" are a feature of many Nepalese monuments, with the Buddha's eyes and eyebrows painted on the four sides of the building. Opposite page, lotus eyes on Swayambhunath stupa, standing on the sacred hill where according to Nepalese tradition the primordial Buddha first appeared. Swayambhunath has long been a great centre of pilgrimage, where worshippers old and young (above) pay homage. Left, the Hindu eye which scrutinizes all comers, carved on a door of the royal palace at Patan (also known as Lalitpur), one of Nepal's most beautiful towns.

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The valley of Kathmandu

From temple precincts to terraced rice-fields, an extraordinary civilization flourishes in harmony with nature

The first complete survey-inventory of the cultural and historical monuments of the Kathmandu valley in Nepal has recently been completed by Carl Pruscha of Austria, a U.N. town planning specialist, in collaboration with Nepalese experts. Covering well over 800 monuments, settlements, sanctuaries and nature preserves, the inventory will serve as the basis for Nepal's global plan for the preservation of its rich cultural and natural heritage. The preservation plan and the detailed inventory of the Kathmandu valley's monuments and sites are to be published as a two-volume study early in 1975 by the Government of Nepal with financial support from Unesco, the John D. Rockefeller III Fund and the Austrian Government (1). Entitled "The Kathmandu Valley: The Preservation of Physical Environment and Cultural Heritage (A Protective Inventory)", the study was prepared by Carl Pruscha, in conjunction with Nepalese colleagues. In the article that follows, Carl Pruscha describes the main features of the Kathmandu valley and its historic sites set in an environment of extraordinary beauty.

(1) Published by Anton Schroll Publishers (Vienna, Austria, and Munich, Fed. Rep. of Germany). The two volumes (296 and 264 pages) are illustrated with 873 black and white photo reproductions and 831 line-drawings, and have an explanatory text in English. Price, for the two volumes, about US.$65.

Photos © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

The Nepalese mastery of the art of shaping their environment is revealed both in their temple architecture and in the intensively cultivated terraced hillsides where they grow rice and other crops. These terraces harmonize perfectly with the steps and staircases of many of Nepal's temples, such as Pashupatinath Temple (opposite page), Nepal's national shrine, which stands on the banks of the sacred Bagmati river near Kathmandu.

by Carl Pruscha

IN our present age, mankind can claim to have conquered and extended its dominion over all the earth, —but at the cost of destroying an earthly paradise. Many of the world's incomparable sites, shaped by nature or the hand of man, are already damaged or destroyed. The few that still remain to us are today threatened by an almost irresistible tide of ugliness and defacement.

Thus we often find ourselves looking back in a spiritual search for the old lost havens of the world. In our hunger for a Shangri-La we are drawn back to the snow-capped roof of the world, the Himalayas. There, on any mountain peak, we seem to glimpse the Hindu god Shiva, whose icy locks melt into the valleys and flow in many tributaries to the Ganges.

Between these cold mountain streams rushing down into the depths, we find an oval-shaped island of tranquillity—the valley of Kathmandu. It is not hard, seeing it, to believe the legend that this was once a great lake. In the centre of the lake lay a small island, on which the primordial Buddha, Vairocana, sprang from a lotus bud.

When Manjushri, the bodhisattva (or future Buddha), personifying supreme wisdom, travelled from Tibet to worship the primordial Buddha, he first used his sword to cleave gaps in the chain of hills surrounding the valley, to let the waters drain away.

This one-time island—now a hill —became the site of one of the oldest Buddhist temples in the world. This Stupa of Swayambhunath (the self-existent Lord) displays in many versions the Buddhist Mandala, a graphic mystic symbol of the universe, combining the geometric forms of the circle and the square.

A steep flight of stairs leads up to the stupa from the east. On the topmost level stands Akshobhya (one of the five "Buddhas of Meditation"), his right hand pointing down to the earth. Akshobhya's colour is blue, his element is the air and his symbol is the vajra (see photo page 37). To the south is the Buddha Ratnasambhava making the gift-bestowing gesture. His colour is yellow, his element is the earth and his symbol is the jewel. To the west stands the Buddha Amitabha in the posture of meditation. His colour is red, his element is fire, and his sym-

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CARL PRUSCHA *of Austria, is an architect, town planner and landscape artist, and has been working since the beginning of 1965 in Nepal for the United Nations. He helped the Nepal government to set up a Department of Physical Planning, and between 1967 and 1973 was its regular consultant. He helped direct and carry out Nepal's major monument survey in the Kathmandu valley.*

bol is the lotus. To the north is the Buddha Amoghasiddhi, the fifth Buddha of Meditation, in the posture of protection. His colour is green, his element is water and his symbol is the sword. In the centre of the stupa is the primordial Buddha himself, Vairocana, making the gesture of teaching. His colour is white, his element is the ether, and the wheel is his symbol.

However far back in time this Buddhist holy place was founded, its presence in the valley has made it the focal point and cradle of an unusual civilization, spanning many centuries, and still flourishing today. The valley of Kathmandu, a unique centre of peace and serenity, is still filled with the spiritual strength which inspired its original inhabitants to found this civilization.

The highly fertile soil of the old lake bottom provides the local population with their material needs. The symbol of this dependence on nature's bounty is the rice shoot, whose production imposes a basic set of rules for keeping man in touch with his environment. These rules have never been written down, but they are universally seen as the basis for the survival of the population and the preservation of a healthy environment. They hold the streams to be holy; they determine the amount of land that should be cultivated, and they preserve the integrity of woods and forests.

Settlements and towns have been set up on terraced slopes but always close to streams and groves, and often in the proximity of sacred rivers on whose banks the ritual cremation of the dead takes place.

The settlements themselves, perfectly fitted into the contours of the land, are as compact as possible and laid out in concentric rings according to occupation—from priests, merchants craftsmen and farmers down to those who carry out the lowliest tasks in the community.

The handing down of role and function over the generations within the settlements rules out any outward spillover into further rings, which imposes an upward, vertical growth pattern on the population. Once the limits of this have been reached, daughter settlements spring up outside the original site, but following the same pattern. In this way, 29 settlements of varying sizes have grown up around the three royal cities of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhadgaon.

While the basic occupation of the population is the cultivation of rice, each settlement also has its own typical manufacturing speciality. Thus Thimi is well-known as the centre for

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Photo Philip Boucas © Rapho, Paris

Photo © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

Opposite page, the Shiva-Parvati temple in the heart of Kathmandu. Shiva and his consort can be seen peering down at passersby from niche top centre of photo, with at each side of them a "wheel of life" motif carved in wood. The temple is at present undergoing restoration. The people of the Kathmandu valley have long been renowned as woodcarvers, and Nepal abounds in countless examples of ornately carved doors, struts, balconies and windows (above). The carvers' work can also be seen in private houses—in Nepal the construction of houses is considered a sacred act. Below, a large lingam surrounded by several smaller ones, in a Nepalese temple. The lingam is the generative emblem of Shiva and the principal sacred symbol placed at the centre of a Hindu temple. It is usually shown, as here, placed on the "yoni", the female generative emblem.

Photo © Carl Pruscha Vienna, Austria

Photo © Wolgenzinger, Zurich

THE 'MANDALA' SANCTUARY OF BODHNATH

Aerial photo at left shows the great Buddhist stupa of Bodhnath near Kathmandu, much frequented by Tibetan pilgrims. The stupa's form is that of the mandala, the geometric diagram combining circles and squares which in Tantric Buddhism symbolizes the universe and the spiritual forces. Mandala motifs can also be seen in photo, opposite page, of scene in temple courtyard in Patan during the festival of Machendranath, the god of Abundance, where women have set out ritual offerings. Below, prayer wheels line the outer wall of the base of the stupa of Swayambhunath. In turning prayer wheels, Buddhists follow the example of the Buddha who, in his first preachings at Sarnath, began "to turn the wheel of doctrine".

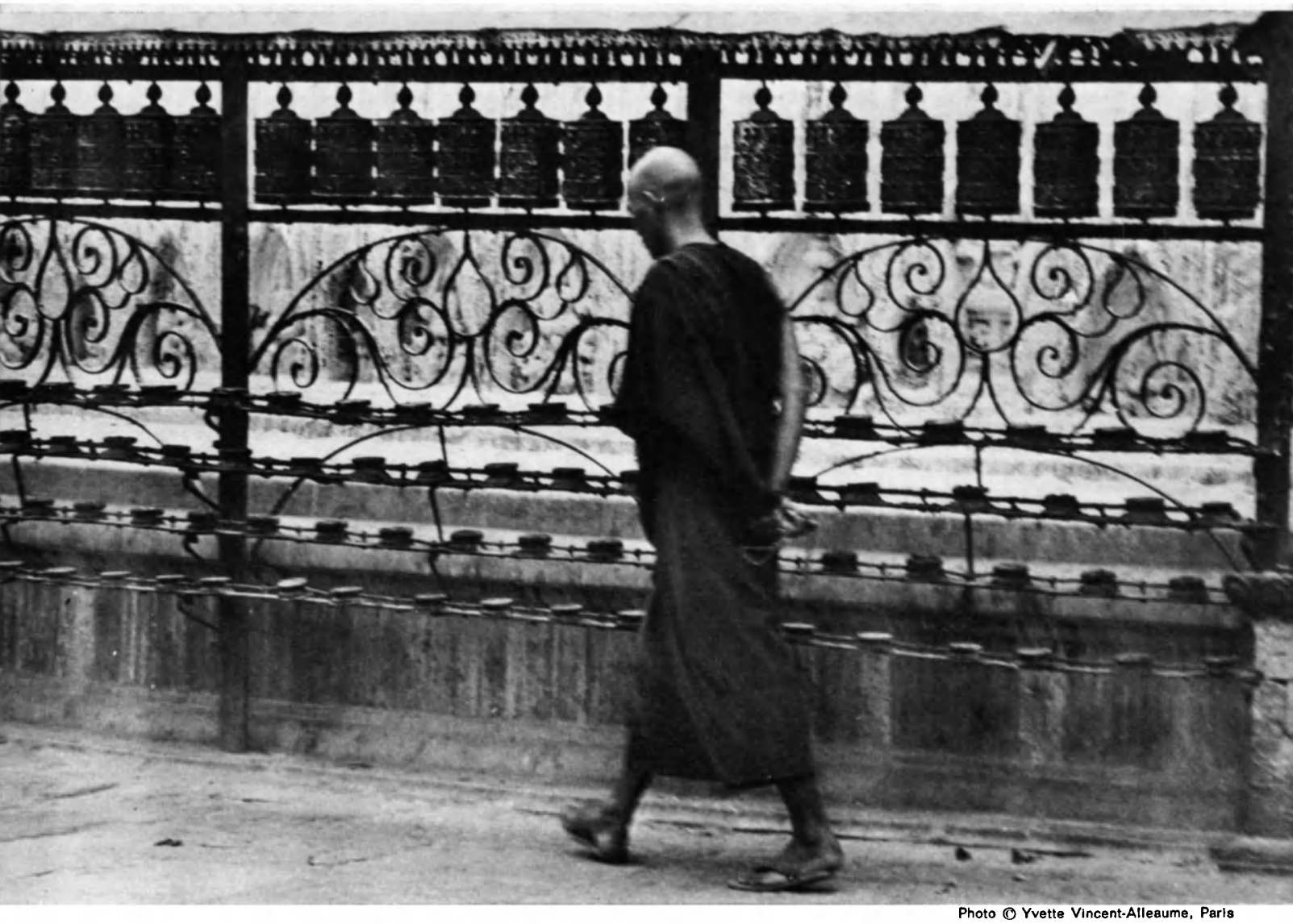

Photo © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

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The Buddhist sanctuary of Bodhnath, to the east of Kathmandu, should first be viewed from the air. Only from this vantage point does its form of a *mandala,* or mystic symbol of the universe, stand out with striking clarity. One first distinguishes a triple circle forming the outer corona of the monument: the houses of Tibetan pilgrims, the circular street, and the first wall surrounding the stupa, around which the faithful walk ritually to the left. The triple circle symbolizes the wheel of reincarnations, the endless cycle of life and death, the temporal world, constantly beset by unrest, from all of which Buddhist teaching seeks to free us.

The Infinite and Eternal, constant and immutable, is represented by the monument itself, the stupa with the "all-seeing eyes of Supreme Buddhahood" gazing from it. All around it, hollowed within the outer wall, is an immense niche containing prayer-wheels, worn and dented from use by generations of pilgrims. Behind them, decorating the rear of the niche, is a frieze of blue and orange Buddhas whose colours are renewed on the occasion of each pilgrimage.

Within the enclosure, five terraces serve as the pedestal of the stupa itself, representing the five elements (ether, air, earth, fire, water) and the five directions (The Zenith, East, South, West, North). Symbol of the immutable celestial world, the dome nevertheless does sometimes change in colour. When I saw it first, shortly after it had been struck by lightning, it was dingy and greyish with piles of blackened wood at its base. But at the time of pilgrimages it is whitewashed all over and then covered with saffron offered by the pilgrims.

The spectacle of this ochre-coloured dome, blending perfectly with the gilded bell-tower of the stupa during these festive occasions, is enhanced by myriads of prayer-banners rising towards the summit of the monument and to the sky. These fluttering streamers, brought as offerings by the pilgrims, are inscribed with the texts of Tibetan prayers. There are white ones representing clouds, others as blue as the sky, green representing water, yellow symbolizing the earth, and red ones the colour of fire.

— Huguette École

from " Népal entre Terre et Ciel ", (Nepal between Heaven and Earth) published by Société Continentale d'Editions Modernes Illustrées, Paris

Photo © Jean-Louis Nou, Paris

VALLEY OF KATHMANDU *(Continued from page 32)*

pottery, Sankhu for its cotton-weaving, Khokana for its oil-pressing industry, and the tiny village of Pyangaon for basket-weaving.

The houses in the Kathmandu valley are built of tiles, either fired or wind-dried. The roofs, built in heavy wood with wide guttering, are covered by small rectangular fired tiles, which from a distance give the impression that each house has been topped with a hand-woven woollen blanket.

The dwellings, set up on tiny patches of land, have storage space for tools on the ground floor, bedrooms on the first floor and a big living room and kitchen on the second. The dining room and private prayer room are on the top floor. The houses are normally built round an inner courtyard, to allow the inhabitants to live together as though forming a single big family.

Since the houses are too small to allow much social communication outside the immediate family, covered platforms have been built at cross-roads and squares, where the men of the town can meet and talk together. The women have their own meeting places by the springs, where they go daily to bathe, wash clothing and to fetch drinking water.

In the centre of each town can be found special gathering places built round the symbol of godliness, the many-roofed pagodas constructed on stepped pyramids. This particular architectural form, which the inhabitants of the Kathmandu valley claim to have invented, can now be found in the area in a hundred different versions.

These pagodas with their steps are often used by hundreds of spectators as vantage points from which to watch the frequent and often lively festivals, while their spreading roofs offer shade and protection from the rain.

But it is not only within the towns and settlements that holy places can be found. They exist also in great numbers in the open country beyond. These sanctuaries are smaller but sometimes more important, since many can be traced back to ancient times. Some are built of pipal trees of giant size, or undressed stone. Many such holy places are no more than chambers dug in the soil—perhaps as a sign of the close link with the Earth Mother.

All these many holy places, without exception, harmonize with their natural surroundings, in settings which underline their significance. The majority of sites are by streams and rivers, such as those of Pashupati and Guheshwari, Gokarna, Sankhunul and

Chobar. Many are set by springs and pools, as at Buddhanilkhantha, Godavari or Balaju. Others, such as Changunarayan, stand on hilltops. Forests and grottoes have also been chosen as sanctuaries for many divinities.

The sites are regularly visited by the inhabitants of the valley, either singly or in groups. Once a year thousands of persons make their way across the fields on pilgrimages to the most important sanctuaries.

The care and veneration shown by the valley's inhabitants for their settlements and towns, their temples and holy places, is closely matched by their concern for the natural environment, in the sowing and harvesting of the rice which is their staple diet.

Thus, farming becomes an artistic creation. Over the centuries, the face of the land has been shaped by this process. Thousands of terraces have been constructed and the landscape veined by countless canals to irrigate the growing rice. This great task of landscaping has been carried out with no other tools but simple hoes.

Now the valley has hardly an acre of land which has not been pressed into use. Here man has genuinely conquered the earth—but without destroying it. In close creative interplay, man and nature have developed together.

When the dry winter etches the grey tones of the terraces against the white backdrop of mountain peaks, the handiwork of man is most clearly seen for a few short weeks. Soon the heavy monsoon rains turn the picture into a waterscape, with hundreds of small lakes rising in tiers. Then, very soon, the rice begins to grow—looking from a distance like light moss—and fills the landscape with innumerable shades of green. Finally comes the ripening, and the rice takes on a burning brightness ranging from yellow to orange.

The settlements themselves, built of the same material and the same earth, also change with the seasons, always maintaining their essential relationship with the soil on which they stand.

Until now this people has preserved intact its environment, maintained its traditional way of life based on its system of the extended family and continued undisturbed its communion with the spiritual and the infinite.

But today the people of the Kathmandu valley face a critical choice: whether to build their future quietly on the foundations of their past, and go on living in their own paradise, or whether to opt for a 20th-century way of life so often beset with commercialism and the errors of misapplied technology.

Is it not the duty of the entire world community to help them in seeking a solution to this problem ? ■

Carl Pruscha

GUARDIANS OF THE SHRINES

Left, statues of elephants and a lion guard the long flight of steps leading up to Nepal's tallest pagoda, the five-storey Nyatapola Temple at Bhadgaon. In Nepal, where there is a long tradition of religious tolerance, pagodas are used by Hindus and Buddhists alike. A form of Buddhism widely practised in Nepal is Tantrism, so named after its Holy Scriptures, the Tantra. An important ritual object of Tantric Buddhism is the "vajra", or thunderbolt, symbol of the Absolute. Photo right shows a huge vajra on the terrace of Swayambhunath stupa near Kathmandu. Most vajras are much smaller in size and are held in the hand by monks as a sacred sceptre.

Photos © Yvette Vincent-Alleaume, Paris

WHAT FUTURE FOR OUR ANCIENT CITIES ?

Continued from page 6

Sanitary considerations often go hand in hand with other concerns closely related to politics or the problems of policing a city. Slum buildings can provide a refuge for swarms of unskilled workers, unsettled, difficult to keep track of and viewed with suspicion by better housed and more prosperous citizens. Such accommodation then becomes suspect and a target for rigorous action, which is another aspect of the "cleaning-up" process.

■ Then there is the spectre of population pressure. In some big cities, extremely rapid growth calls for a judicious use of space, and some technicians would not hesitate to tear down two- or three-storey buildings in a historic centre and replace them with high-rise constructions. They imagine that this will increase the amount of accommodation, although experience has often shown that this is an illusion, since redevelopment schemes in city centres generally encourage the building of offices and banks rather than new houses.

■ Some clearer motivations are expressed in economic terms. Historic towns or localities overcrowded with people who are poor if not actually destitute, appear to be unjustifiably occupying space and preventing it from being put to more profitable use.

To let these buildings stand, goes the argument, means restoring hundreds of buildings, constructing miles of roads, and laying endless lengths of cables. Even if this kind of programme caused property values to rise, it would still be unprofitable, and thus in many countries financially unacceptable to the authorities.

On the other hand, urban development schemes which are initially presented as partial renovation programmes but are designed to spread, seem infinitely more profitable. And so they are—for some.

■ The most frequent cause of demolition is a controversial though still widely practised form of town planning, in which the needs of traffic take precedence over everything else.

By first opening up a few roads in a town of historic interest, so as to reduce traffic congestion, and then laying out avenues, crossing the town in various directions, it is thought that the town's essential historic features —buildings, a celebrated view, a restored quarter—will have been preserved.

The truth is that the original layout will have been distorted, the city disfigured and disorganized and soon destroyed as an urban ensemble. This process has happened too often over the last 50 years to need elaboration. Whenever short-term planning gives absolute priority to the road system and the needs of motor traffic, it regards groups of buildings from the pre-industrial era as obstacles and treats them as such, irrespective of their size and value as monuments.

■ Some villages of historical interest are subject to the same pressures, in spite of—or because of—their renown. Although city-dwellers who buy houses in these villages as week-end homes may respect their style and proportions, the same cannot be said for the shop-keepers, craftsmen, contractors and developers who proliferate in their wake.

The more a village is uniform in style and appearance, and the more harmoniously it fits into the landscape, the more vulnerable it is. It can be spoiled within a few years by developers who were originally attracted by its solitude, its uniqueness and its historic charm—in other words, by its "undeveloped" state.

Local and State authorities who are thinking of protecting a historic locality, town or site, have usually gone beyond the stage of making out a case for the preservation of cultural property. Yet nearly always they have to overcome the kind of arguments and practices described above.

They should realize that calculations for urban renovation projects are not always reliable guides, except in quantitative terms which do not take into account every aspect of the social costs involved.

The quality of life in a city cannot be measured in financial terms. The urban development schemes which are most successful in the eyes of their promoters are not necessarily those which, in the long run, are beneficial to the community.

Some highly industrialized countries have also become aware in recent years that if millions of old dwellings were repaired and restored, they would last as long as, if not longer than, present-day constructions. As such they represent a considerable capital asset, which would be almost totally lost if they were demolished.

Thus a rational housing policy should consider preservation as part of its overall approach to housing, especially since the renovation of old dwellings will continue to be for a long time to come the chief means of providing homes for the poorer members of the community. Bringing new life to historic localities, in particular, has become an economic and social necessity as well as a cultural one.

Today, when attempts are being made to redefine the goals of progress and to measure them against the hazards of growth, and when defenders of the environment are challenging many forms of destructive exploitation, it has become quite clear that old towns are among the irreplaceable resources which no country can afford to sacrifice.

2

An international inquiry on national laws for the protection of historic sites

IN 1973, at Unesco's request, the International Council of Monuments and Sites carried out an inquiry among its 45 national committees on current laws and regulations for the protection of historic sites and towns and groups of ancient buildings.

The results of the survey show strikingly that protection is inadequate in almost every country and that different countries have adopted different measures.

Very few of them have special laws or regulations for the preservation of historic quarters, towns or sites, drawn up and enforced jointly by the two authorities usually responsible for such measures, that is, the historic monuments services and those in charge of building and town planning.

From the survey it appears that this is the case only in France and Bulgaria. Elsewhere the protection of historic quarters is covered by laws for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage (as in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mexico, Poland, Tunisia, Venezuela and Vatican City), or comes under building and town-planning (in Denmark, Finland, and Luxembourg).

In other countries the system is still more complex, and historic localities are protected by various laws and regulations, dealing either with the protection of the cultural heritage

To preserve these towns in all their diversity is to give the people who live in them today a longed-for opportunity for social life. The modern town-dweller is not filled with nostalgia for the past, but he yearns for an art of living, and this should not be rejected when the only alternative offered to him is the cult of the motor car, in a world of steel and concrete.

It is precisely because anonymity and isolation seem impossible in old towns and quarters that they are today attracting the children and grandchildren of those who deserted them. And partly for the same reasons they are attracting builders with highly original ideas. Many architects and town planners believe that the old towns disparaged by their predecessors are not just relics of the past but models from which they can draw inspiration.

Many young people feel strongly that these historic towns and buildings must be preserved. In some countries it is the young who most of all frequent the old parts of cities and when necessary fight to save them from destruction. Perhaps they feel that when an old town is destroyed, something more than its familiar streets is destroyed with it.

For an overwhelming majority of people, untouched by the culture acquired from books, old cities are the only historical evidence they can perceive and understand. Old cities are the repositories of the struggles, customs and aspirations of those who gradually shaped the world in which we live.

In its old towns and cities, more surely than in its national language, a country can discover the roots of its personality. For the generations of our time, cut off from the common past, historic cities are becoming the collective memory of mankind. The disappearance of such places would condemn them to live in the uncertainty and isolation of men with no remembrance of the past.

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or with town-planning, which have usually been drawn up separately by each of the authorities concerned (as in Spain, Italy and U.K.).

A number of countries still have no protection system, though some of them are currently preparing new laws and regulations.

Only in a few of the countries covered by the survey do laws for the protection of historic localities and sites require a detailed inventory to be drawn up of the buildings in the protected area. This is essential if the laws are to be effectively applied. In Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, Mexico, and Spain these inventories are now being prepared.

In other countries, quite a large number of national committees of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (Cyprus, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Switzerland, Tunisia and Venezuela) consider that the national lawmaking machinery is inadequate. This applies particularly to financing and the supervision of restoration and renovation.

Finally, even where laws are deemed adequate, as in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Hungary, Poland and Spain, problems arise in implementing them. The main difficulties are a lack of supervision, penalties which are too light or not enforced, lack of interest or understanding by authorities and individuals, and shortage of funds.

An international agreement on these questions would thus be of service to all those concerned with the protection of historic localities and towns.

In Unesco's view, action for the preservation of ancient cities comes within the broader context of several crucial modern problems including the need to improve the quality of life. A series of international recommendations or conventions sponsored by Unesco has carefully defined the principles and aims of the preservation of the environment.

The Recommendation concerning the protection of the beauty and character of landscapes and sites, adopted in 1962, for instance, warns against the dangers of "uncontrolled urban development". The Recommendation on the preservation of cultural property endangered by public or private works, adopted in 1968, stresses that it is urgent to "harmonize the preservation of the cultural heritage with changes due to social and economic development."

Similarly, the Recommendation concerning the protection, at the national level, of the cultural and natural heritage, adopted in 1972, recognizes that it is "essential for human equilibrium and development to preserve a setting in contact with nature and the evidence of civilization bequeathed by past generations."

Lastly, the Convention on the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage, also adopted in 1972, declares that "the deterioration or disappearance of any part of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all nations."

It is with these ideas in mind that Unesco is now drawing up an international regulation for the protection of historic localities, cities and sites and their integration into a modern environment. Preservation, in this context, means planning based on a global concept of the environment. Thus, far from being restrictive, it forms an integral part of the economic and social development of the whole urban or rural environment.

Following more consultations, it is hoped that this international regulation will be ready in 1976, and that it will encourage States to adopt effective legal measures.

Two conclusions can already be drawn. The first is that the protection of historic cities and localities, and especially their maintenance and restoration (as in the case of natural and archaeological sites) must become an integral part of the reorganization and development of the urban area or region concerned.

This decision must be taken at the highest level by authorities responsible for overall development. In certain cases it must be taken by the government itself and, in any event, it should involve not only the minister for culture, but also the ministers for economic affairs, development or equipment, planning and finance. Only such authorities are able to study ways and means, authorize operations and make financial provision.

Neither competence and devotion at subordinate levels nor the enthusiasm and alertness of cultural organizations can replace this political determination. Maintenance and restoration is a component of global planning and an integral part of the reorganization of a locality or region. Only a government decision to protect and restore historical centres can ensure that laws will be drawn up, funds will be made available and other measures taken.

The second conclusion is that the cultural renewal of a town, locality or village would be meaningless if no way was found to arouse the interest of local people who, in any case, must participate in the project. It sometimes happens that the renovation of old quarters is mainly due to the effort of private individuals, the authorities providing only legal advice and technical aid. Yet even when authorities make a more important contribution, the participation of the community is still indispensable.

Historic cities, it has been said, must be preserved for mankind and for posterity. This is true. But first and foremost they must be protected and restored for the men and women who live in them, with their collaboration and for their benefit. ■

Georges Fradier

15 cities launching major preservation operations

DURING the past 15 years Unesco has mobilized international aid for the conservation and restoration of monuments and other cultural treasures in many parts of the world. In particular it has been directly associated with operations for the protection and renovation of historic cities and sites. The following brief account of several of these projects shows how Unesco is helping some of its member states to preserve historic sites, while integrating them into modern urbanism.

Kyoto (Japan)

In September 1970, the Japanese National Commission for Unesco and the Agency for Cultural Affairs of the Japanese Ministry of Education organized an international symposium on the preservation of historic localities, particularly in the ancient city of Kyoto, Japan's former capital.

The symposium, held in Kyoto, showed that the concept of a historic locality was not legally or administratively recognized in Japan and that commercial development, urban renovation projects, and changes in social and economic patterns of daily life were seriously endangering the quality of the environment in one of the most beautiful of Japanese cities.

In April 1972, following the international symposium, the Kyoto Municipality decided:

- To designate seven scenic beauty zones in the city. Within these zones, areas around five major historic monuments and two historic localities located east of the Kamo River were to be placed under the protection and control of the municipality;
- To limit the construction of large modern structures in more than half of the city.

The Municipality also designated historic areas where examples of traditional architecture are to be preserved and in which it will grant subsidies to enable private owners to repair buildings in poor condition. Any new construction in these areas must harmonize in height and design with existing buildings.

Ouro Preto (Brazil)

Vila Rica, which changed its name to Ouro Preto (Black Gold) in 1823 after the proclamation of independence by Brazil, was the seat of the Minas Gerais State Government until 1897. As the centre of a region immensely rich in gold deposits, Ouro Preto played a leading part in Brazilian history in the 18th century. Starting as a camping ground for the "Bandeirantes" who poured into Minas Gerais when the gold rush began in 1698, it speedily became a town where baroque art and architecture flourished and on which talented artists such as the famous 18th-century sculptor, "O Aleijadinho" left their mark.

Almost entirely abandoned at the close of the 19th century when the deposits had been worked out, the town remained as one of Brazil's historic and artistic shrines.

As a result of the current economic explosion in Brazil, Ouro Preto is again becoming a vigorous and flourishing town as well as an outstanding centre of cultural tourism. In consequence, the cultural heritage which gives it its special charm and interest is threatened by the wave of modernization and change, and a programme of adaptation to contemporary needs is called for.

The Brazilian federal and regional authorities have realized the necessity of preserving for modern Brazil this splendid illustration of a chapter in the country's short but eventful history. Since 1968, at their request, several missions of Unesco consultants and staff have studied ways of promoting the development of the town while preserving its unique character.

The missions led to the drawing up of a master plan for safeguarding Ouro Preto. The plan proposes town-planning regulations laying down standards for new construction in the town itself and on the surrounding hills which were threatened by a proliferation of new buildings ill-suited to the natural and urban landscape.

The master plan outlines solutions for traffic and parking problems and comprises a programme for renovating the whole urban infrastructure, including the sewage and the drinking water systems, and the electricity and telephone services, as well as a plan for the preservation of open spaces and the restoration of many historic buildings. It also proposes the setting up of an organization to be responsible for co-ordinating and carrying out these programmes.

Isfahan (Iran)

Isfahan, whose history goes back more than 2,000 years, consists of two distinct parts: the Safavid town with its splendid monuments, and buildings dating from the pre-Safavid period, including one of Isfahan's architectural glories, the Juma Mosque.

From the point of view of world culture, town-planning and tourism, this Iranian city-monument ranks on a par with Venice. As the cultural influence of Venice spread through the West, so Isfahan influenced the culture and art of the East. As it stands today, its splendid skyline virtually intact, Isfahan offers an enchanting spectacle.

Yet Isfahan is in imminent danger on account of its rapid growth. Its population has doubled during the last ten years because of the introduction of industry and the inflow of immigrants from the surrounding farmlands.

Though new industrial plants may not be built within a radius of 50 km of Isfahan, their existence nevertheless creates new needs within the city itself. Thus urban development on a large scale has become necessary in order to improve living conditions and ease the flow of goods and traffic in the city. This has led to the building of a new airport, railroad and university, and modifications in the layout of certain streets.

Iran, like many other countries, thus faces a crucial problem: how to provide for a city's modernization and economic growth while preserving its cultural heritage. In Isfahan, the Iranian government has set itself four objectives: to renovate and preserve, to modernize and expand.

A special commission under the patronage of H.M. the Empress of Iran has been formed to co-ordinate the work of the various government services responsible for carrying out the plan.

Unesco has helped in the preparation of the Isfahan project by providing experts for planning and consultation. So far five advisory missions have been sent to Iran under the United Nations Development Programme, and further missions are scheduled for the near future.

★

Unesco is also, or will soon be, associated with national activities for the protection and restoration of the Medina of Tunis, the Casbah of Algiers and the Medina of Fez (Morocco), for the abbey and site of the town of Echternach (Luxembourg) and the towns of Herat (Afghanistan), Lahore (Pakistan), San Salvador de Bahia (Brazil), Cuzco (Peru), Cartagena de Indias (Columbia) and Gondar (Ethiopia), as well as the palace of Fumban (Cameroun) and historic monuments in Senegal—at St Louis and on the island of Gorée. An outstanding example of aid given by Unesco for the conservation of ancient cities is the international campaign it launched in 1966 for the preservation of Venice.

Photo Unesco - Claude Bablin

An African named for first time Director-General of Unesco

The first African to become Director-General of Unesco was elected by Unesco's General Conference on November 14, 1974. He is Amadou Mahtar M' Bow, of Senegal (at right in photo above), who will serve for a six-year term, succeeding René Maheu, of France (above left), who was Director-General since 1962.

Taking the oath of office, Mr M'Bow declared: "From now on I am a citizen of each of your countries, the servant of all the Member States in their totality."

He told delegates from Unesco's 135 member countries he was certain that millions of men and women would consider his election "as a step towards eliminating the prejudices which have so often and so tragically marked world history, and as proof of a desire to base international co-operation on more equitable grounds.

"Since each of us is marked by the environment in which he was born and grew up", he said, "it is first of all in the spirit of the African people, and in their wisdom that I shall find guidance for my actions. I interpret your vote as a mark of consideration and esteem for the regions and peoples—those of the Third World—which have for so long been restricted to a marginal role in taking decisions and exerting influence at a global level."

Today, more than ever, said Mr M'Bow, Unesco cannot afford to trail world events "but must resolutely take its place in the vanguard of the double movement of emancipation of peoples which characterizes our time."

UNESCO'S GENERAL CONFERENCE ENDS

THE 18th session of Unesco's General Conference, which opened on October 17, 1974, closed on November 23 after electing a new Director-General, Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, and adopting Unesco's programme and a budget totalling $169,992,000 for the period 1975-1976. The General Conference of Unesco is composed of the government representatives of all Unesco Member States.

During this session, which elected Mrs. Magda Joboru, of Hungary, President of the General Conference, the number of Unesco Member States rose from 132 to 135 with the admission of the People's Republic of Korea, Guinea-Bissau, and the Republic of San Marino. Representatives of fourteen African liberation movements were accepted as observers as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Conference expressed "the firm hope that Palestine will rejoin the community of nations within the international organizations including Unesco."

Following a debate on general policy, the Conference adopted a resolution which recalls that "hundreds of millions of human beings, threatened by poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance, have not yet reached the threshold of human dignity." This resolution also affirms that "the defence and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the struggle against incitement to war, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racialism, apartheid and all other forms of oppression and discrimination are an essential duty for Unesco."

In the course of the Session, the General Conference voted after long debate several resolutions concerning Israel.

Since the Unesco General Conference of 1968, the Organization had on repeated occasions issued urgent appeals to Israel to "desist from any alteration of the cultural and historical character of Jerusalem, particularly with regard to Christian and Islamic religious sites". Earlier this year the Unesco Executive Board at its 94th Session (May 20 to June 28, 1974) had "condemned Israel's persistent violation of the resolutions adopted by the General Conference and the Executive Board in this regard". On November 20, 1974, the Unesco General Conference voted a resolution which "condemns Israel for its attitude which is contradictory to the aims of the Organization as stated in its constitution". The resolution invites the Director-General "to withhold assistance from Israel in the fields of education, science and culture until such time as it scrupulously respects the aforementioned resolutions and decisions."

In addition, the General Conference voted a resolution calling on Israel "to refrain from any act hindering the populations of the occupied Arab territories in the exercise of their rights to national education and cultural life."

The General Conference adopted a number of resolutions concerning world peace, human rights, equality for women and the establishment of a new international economic order, etc. A resolution concerning Chile was adopted, calling for the immediate cessation of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Chile and requesting the Director-General to take measures to secure full respect for human rights in that country.

At the close of the General Conference the new Director-General, Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, launched "an urgent appeal for tolerance and understanding". "We must avoid at Unesco's General Conference those conflicts that take on the character of systematic confrontations. We should perhaps even avoid the adoption of resolutions, even with large majorities, that could result in deep bitterness in certain quarters... The golden rule for an organization such as Unesco should always be the search for a consensus through patient and open dialogue."

ISRAEL AND UNESCO

A statement by the Secretariat of Unesco

IN the light of misunderstandings, reflected in some press reports during the past few weeks, of resolutions voted by the last session of the General Conference of Unesco that affect Israel, the Secretariat of Unesco wishes to underline the following facts:

1) Israel has not been "excluded" from Unesco. Nothing in any of the resolutions passed affects Israel's continuing membership in Unesco. As a Member State it is able to participate in all activities of the Organization as in the past, including all meetings and conferences. Israeli scientists, educators and cultural specialists will be called upon to contribute to the Organization as they have done in the past, and the hope is that they will continue to do so.

2) Israel has not been included in the European Regional Group of Unesco—one of the five regional groupings for programme purposes established by the General Conference—as Israel had requested. However, it can participate, as an observer, in European or other Regional Conferences, as has been the case in the past.

3) Regarding Jerusalem, the General Conference invited the Director-General to "withhold assistance from Israel in the fields of education, science and culture until such time as it scrupulously respects" previous General Conference resolutions concerning the cessation of archaeological excavations, the protection of monuments and the preservation of the historic character of the city of Jerusalem. The Director-General intends to execute this resolution faithfully, and has already so informed the General Conference. At present, the consequence of this resolution is interpreted to mean only the withholding of aid under Unesco's Participation Programme (Israel received $24,000 in 1973/1974).

4) Regarding possible assistance to the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Secretariat has received no such request, which, according to the pertinent resolution, should come through the League of Arab States. An authorization for aid under the Participation Programme was part of broader decisions to associate African liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, recognized by the League of Arab States, with the activities of the Organization. Assistance has already been provided by Unesco to African liberation movements in the field of education.

5) Finally, an additional resolution of the General Conference invited the Director-General to "exercise full supervision of the operation of educational and cultural institutions in the occupied territories and to co-operate with the Arab States concerned and the Palestine Liberation Organization with a view to providing the populations in the occupied territories with every means of enjoying their rights to education and culture". The Director-General is studying the means of carrying out this resolution. The General Conference has been advised that a good deal of information will have to be gathered and consultations initiated before certain practical problems of implementation can be presented to Unesco's Executive Board for advice.

(signed)

Alberto Obligado
Assistant Director-General
for Communication

Unesco awarded John XXIII Peace Prize

The John XXIII Peace Prize has been awarded this year to Unesco for its work in promoting human rights and international understanding. Founded in 1963 by Pope John XXIII, the prize has only once previously been awarded. The award was announced by the representative of the Holy See on November 14, 1974 during ceremonies honouring Unesco's outgoing Director-General, René Maheu. On this occasion Unesco's General Conference paid a long tribute to Mr. Maheu for his outstanding leadership and devotion which had enabled Unesco "to become an effective force in the effort to promote peace and human rights."

Letters to the Editor

AL-BIRUNI 'LIKE FINDING A TREASURE'

Sir,

My mother, Elise Gillette, is an ardent "Courier" fan. She writes of the number on al-Biruni (June 1974): "I'd never even heard of him. The section on philosophy stumped me, but the rest was like finding a treasure."

A. Gillette
Paris, France

Sir,

I found your special issue devoted to al-Biruni a mountain of boredom. What the world owes to this scholar could surely have been summed up in a single article.

Bernard Hermel
Fontenay-le-Fleury, France

Sir,

I enjoyed your issue on al-Biruni, since one has too few opportunities for learning about the great figures of Asian culture.

By acting as a link between the world's cultures, the "Unesco Courier" fulfils an important Unesco ideal. Congratulations on the whole issue—on the translations of al-Biruni's writings, the high-quality presentation of the texts, and the photos, which not only illustrate the contents of the articles but communicate thoughts and ideas which cannot be expressed in words.

Luiz Marcos Facunde
Sao Paulo, Brazil

POP OR NO POP ?

Sir,

Your query to readers, "Want an issue on pop music?", produced a fascinating crop of replies for your letters page (April 1974 issue) with some revealing attitudes for and against pop music.

A continuing controversy indeed calls for an assessment to be made, but I fear that this kind of "prophecy" is beyond the scope of the "Unesco Courier". It might be more reasonable to let passions abate before trying to reach an unbiased judgement.

The "Unesco Courier" has been devoting much space to music and paying little attention to drama, the theatre, the variety show, pantomime and the circus, an art as ancient as the hills yet always young. I would like to see the circus and the theatre given place on your pages.

Alexander Stepanov
student
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Sir,

Unlike opponents of pop music, I would welcome an issue with a comprehensive analysis of this trend in music. Is it something entirely new in melody, harmony and other modes of musical expression? Or is it not as original and revolutionary as its admirers, who don't seem hard to please, would have us believe?

The views of pop music devotees are hardly convincing. Is pop music only attractive because of its "violence and despair and its planetary use of instruments from every continent"? No one could object to a wide use of various national musical instruments, but I believe that most people today would find it hard to agree with the idea that the future belongs to those whose hearts are filled with "violence and despair".

A. Gaivoronsky
Tula, U.S.S.R.

EIGHT CENTURIES OF WALDENSIAN HISTORY

Sir,

This year has seen the commemoration of the eighth centenary of Waldensian beliefs and teaching. The Waldenses suffered persecution during seven centuries. Theirs was not only a philosophical and religious movement, but also offered an early example of social emancipation in that women took an active part in the life of Waldensian communities.

Equally extraordinary for the Middle Ages is the fact that most Waldenses learned to read and write. It was they who in 1532 commissioned and published the first Bible printed in French, known as the Neuchatel Bible, and later the Lyons Bible. To pay for its publication, Waldensian peasant communities between them collected 1,500 gold écus. Such a unique enterprise is perhaps worth recalling.

J. Groffier
Amicale du Luberon
Apt, France

Editor's Note : *Jean Groffier is the author of a book on the history and philosophy of the Waldensian movement, which was founded in 12th-century France, entitled "Qui sont les Vaudois?" (Who are the Waldenses?) published by Editions Reboulin, Apt-en-Provence, France.*

MEAT-EATING SUPERSTITION

Sir,

In his article, " Can the Earth feed the Growing Multitudes ? " (July-August 1974 issue) Roger Revelle states that a large fraction of available agricultural land is needed to produce food for livestock.

This is surely a complete superstition, since livestock are not necessary for the human diet or survival, and in fact their breeding could be steadily reduced, and the freed land used for the production of protein foods for human consumption.

There is already a large literature on this subject, to which I hope you will give full publicity in future issues.

G. Eedle
Chairman, London Group
The Theosophical Order
of Service, London, U.K.

Editor's Note : *Mr. Eedle may be a vegetarian but much of the world, unfortunately, is not.*

IN COPERNICUS' FOOTSTEPS

Sir,

I was so fascinated by the number of the "Unesco Courier" entitled "Copernicus, a new vision of the universe" (April 1973), that I have decided to study astronomy. I very much admire Copernicus and the other pioneers of modern astronomy, Galileo, Tycho Brahe, Kepler and Newton.

Juan Alfonso Sosa
aged 11, "José A. Echeverria" school
Havana, Cuba

RUSSIA'S FIRST PRINTED TEXT-BOOK

Sir,

This year, 1974, the Soviet public is celebrating the 400th anniversary of the first Russian printed text-book. The text-book was compiled and printed by Ivan Fyodorov, some time before February 1574, in Lvov, a major cultural centre in Western Ukraine, then part of Poland.

The text-book is based on material of Moscow origin but also contains the Serbian version of a Bulgarian book. It was used not only by Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians but also by southern Slavs. Thus we might say that Russia's first printed text-book symbolizes the cultural collaboration among the six Slavonic peoples.

F.I. Setin
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

NEW VISTAS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Sir,

My warmest congratulations on your March 1974 issue on the Handicapped. Your title, "New Vistas in Special Education" for my article published in the issue, could not have been bettered.

It was a happy co-incidence that this number appeared when it did, for the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession held its annual conference in Dublin, in April, and the theme was education for pupils with special needs. The "Unesco Courier" was available in the English and French editions and the whole magazine was the source of many favourable comments from the participants at this international conference.

The issue also makes excellent background reading for the paper I am delivering at a conference on the training of personnel for the multiply handicapped, being held this year in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Prof. John McKenna
Dublin
Republic of Ireland

POWER FROM THE SUN

Sir,

Congratulations on your issue "Power from the Sun" (January 1974). To my mind this is the ideal kind of subject for the "Unesco Courier". It is topical, it has great economic (and therefore human) interest, and it could greatly help to improve conditions of life in still developing countries (not forgetting more fortunate countries).

G. Perra
Lyons, France

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